

# Democrat and Sentinel.

THE BLESSINGS OF GOVERNMENT, LIKE THE DEWS OF HEAVEN, SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED ALIKE, UPON THE HIGH AND THE LOW, THE RICH AND THE POOR.

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## Gen. Scott's Letter.

Since we published a letter from Gen. Winfield Scott addressed to Abraham Lincoln on the eve of his inauguration to the Presidency, in which some of the views of the old General have been made known to the public, this letter already has attracted considerable interest and called for a rejoinder from our readers. In order to do justice to our readers without any compromise, we will, however be obliged to publish a portion of Mr. Buchanan's letter in reply to our columns.

order, 1, to prevent the seizure of that fort by the nullifiers, and 2, to enforce the execution of the revenue laws. Gen. Scott himself arrived at Charleston the day after the passage of the ordinance of nullification and many of the additional companies were then en route for the same destination.

"President Jackson familiarly said at the time 'that, by the assemblage of those forces, for lawful purposes, he was not making war upon South Carolina; but that if South Carolina attacked them it would be South Carolina that made war upon the United States.'"

"General S., who received his first instructions (oral) from the President, in the temporary absence of the Secretary of War (General Cass), remembers those expressions well."

"Saturday night, Dec. 15, 1860."

December 28.—Again, after Major Anderson had gallantly and wisely thrown his handful of men from Fort Moultrie into Fort Sumpter—learning that, on demand of South Carolina, there was great danger he might be ordered by the Secretary back to the less tenable work, or out of the harbor—I wrote this note:

"Lieutenant General Scott (who has had a bad night, and can scarcely hold up his head this morning) begs to express the hope to the Secretary of War:—1. That orders may not be given for the evacuation of Ft. Sumpter. 2. That one hundred and fifty recruits may instantly be sent from Governor's Island to reinforce that garrison, with ample supplies of ammunition and subsistence, including fresh vegetables, such as potatoes, onions, turnips; and 3. That one or two armed vessels be sent to support the said Fort."

"Lieut. General S., avails himself of this opportunity also to express the hope that the recommendations heretofore made by him to the Secretary of War respecting Forts Jackson, St. Philip, Morgan, and Pulaski, and particularly in respect to Fort Pickens and McRae, and the Pensacola Navy Yard, in connection with the last two named works, may be re-considered by the Secretary."

"Lieutenant General S., will further ask the attention of the Secretary to Forts Jefferson and Taylor, which are wholly untenable, being of far greater value even to the most distant points of the Atlantic coast and the people on the upper waters of the Missouri, Mississippi and Ohio rivers, than to the State of Florida.—There is only a feeble company at Key West for the defence of Ft. Taylor, and not a soldier in Fort Jefferson to resist a handful of filibusters, or a row boat of pirates; and the Gulf, soon after the beginning of secession or revolutionary troubles in the adjacent States, will swarm with such miscreants."†

December 30.—I addressed the President again as follows:

"Lieutenant General Scott begs the President of the United States to pardon the irregularity of this communication. It is Sunday, the weather is bad, and Gen. S. is not well enough to go to church.

"But matters of the highest national importance seem to forbid a moment's delay, and if misled by zeal, he hopes for the President's forgiveness."

"Will the President permit General S. without reference to the War Department, and otherwise as secretly as possible, to send two hundred and fifty recruits from New York harbor, to reinforce Fort Sumpter, together with some extra muskets or rifles, ammunition and subsistence?"

"It is hoped that a sloop-of-war and cutter may be ordered for the same purpose as early as to-morrow."

"General S. will wait upon the President at any moment he may be called for."

The South Carolina Commissioners had already been many days in Washington, and no movement of defence (on the part of the United States) was permitted.

I will here close my notice of Fort Sumpter by quoting from some of my previous reports.

It would have been easy to reinforce this fort down to about the 12th of February. In this long delay Fort Moultrie had been repaired and greatly strengthened in every way by the rebels. Many powerful new land batteries (beside a formidable raft) had been constructed. Hulks, too, have been sunk in the principal channels, so as to render access to Fort Sumpter from the sea impracticable, without first carrying all the lower batteries of the secessionists. The difficulty of reinforcing has thus been increased ten or twelve fold. First, the late President refused to allow any attempt to be made, because he was holding negotiations with the South Carolina commissioners.

Afterwards, Secretary Holt and myself endeavored, in vain, to obtain a ship-of-war for the purpose, and were finally

obliged to employ the passenger steamer "Star of the West."—That vessel, but for the hesitation of the master, might, as is generally believed, delivered at the fort the men and subsistence on board. This attempt at success failing, I next verbally submitted to the late Cabinet either that success be sent by ships-of-war, fighting their way by the batteries, (increasing in strength daily) or that Major Anderson should be left to ameliorate his condition by the muzzles of his guns—that is, enforcing supplies by bombardment, and by bringing to merchant vessels, helping himself, (giving orders for payment) or finally be allowed to evacuate the fort, which in that case, would be inevitable.

But, before any resolution was taken, the late Secretary of the navy making difficulties about the want of suitable war vessels, another commissioner from South Carolina arrived causing further delay. When this had passed away, Secretaries Holt and Toucey, Captain Ward, of the navy, and myself, with the knowledge of the President (Buchanan) settled upon the employment, under the Captain (who was eager for the expedition), of three or four small steamers belonging to the Coast Survey. At that time (late in January), I have but little doubt that Captain Ward would have reached Fort Sumpter with all his vessels. But he was kept back by something like a *truce* or armistice, [made here] embracing Charleston and Pensacola harbors, agreed upon between the late President and certain principal seceders of South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, &c., and this truce lasted to the end of that administration.

That plan and all others, without a squadron of war ships and a considerable army—competent to take and hold the many formidable batteries below Fort Sumpter, and before the exhaustion of its subsistence—having been pronounced, from the change of circumstances impracticable, by Maj. Anderson, Capt. Foster, [Chief Engineer] and all the other officers of the Fort, as well as by Brigadier Gen. Totten, Chief of the corps of Engineers; and, concurring in that opinion, I did not hesitate to advise, [March 12th] that Major Anderson be instructed to evacuate the fort, so long held by him and his companions, immediately on procuring suitable transportation to take them to New York. His relative weakness had steadily increased in the last eighteen days.

It was not till January 31 [when the first commissioners from South Carolina withdrew] that the permission I had solicited October 31st, was obtained to admit commandants of the few Southern forts with garrisons, to be on the alert against surprises and sudden assaults. [Major Anderson was not among the admitted, being already straitly beleaguered.]

JANUARY 3d.—To Lieutenant Stenner, commanding in Pensacola harbor:

"The General in Chief directs that you take measures to do the utmost in your power to prevent the seizure of either of the forts in Pensacola harbor, by surprise or assault, consulting first with the commander of the navy-yard, who will probably have received instructions to cooperate with you."—[This order was signed by Aide-de-Camp Lay.]

It was just before the surrender of the Pensacola navy-yard [January 12] that Lieutenant Stenner, calling upon Commodore Armstrong, obtained the aid of some thirty common seamen or laborers or no marines, which, added to his forty-six soldiers, made up his numbers to seventy-six men, with whom this meritorious officer has since held Fort Pickens, and performed, working night and day, an immense amount of labor in mounting guns, keeping up a strong guard, &c., &c.

Early in January I renewed, as has been seen my solicitations to be allowed to reinforce Fort Pickens, but a good deal of time was lost in vacillations. First, the President "thought that if no movement is made by the United States Fort McRae will probably not be occupied nor Fort Pickens attacked. In case of movements by the United States, which will doubtless be made known by the wires, there will be corresponding local movements, and the attempt to reinforce be useless." (Quotation from a note made by Aide-de-Camp Lay, about January 12, of the President's reply to a message from me) Next, it was doubted whether it would be safe to send reinforcements in an unarmed steamer, and the want, as usual, of a suitable naval vessel—the Brooklyn being long held in reserve at Norfolk for some purpose unknown to me. Finally, after I had kept a body of three hundred recruits in New York harbor ready for some time—and they would have been sufficient to reinforce temporarily Fort Pickens and occupy Fort McRae also—the President, about January 18, permitted that

the sloop-of-war Brooklyn should take a single company ninety men, from Fort Monroe, Hampton Roads, and reinforce Lieutenant Stenner, in Fort Pickens, but without a surplus man for the neighborhood of Fort McRae.

The Brooklyn, with Capt. Vogles' company alone left the Chesapeake for Fort Pickens about January 22d, and, on the 29th, President Buchanan, having entered into a *quasi* armistice with certain seceders at Pensacola and elsewhere, caused Secretaries Holt and Toucey to instruct in joint note, the commander of the war vessels off Pensacola and Lieut. Stenner, commanding Fort Pickens, to commit no act of hostility and not to land Captain Vogles' company unless that fort should be attacked.†

[That joint note I never saw until March 25th, but supposed the armistice was consequent upon the meeting of the Peace Convention at Washington, and was understood to terminate with it.]

Hearing however, of the most active preparations for hostilities on the part of the seceders at Pensacola, by the erection of new batteries and arming Fort McRae—that had not a gun mounted when it was seized—during the Peace Convention and since, I brought the subject to the notice of the new Administration, when this note, dated March 12th, to Captain Vogles, was agreed upon, viz: "At the first favorable moment you will land with your company, reinforce Fort Pickens, and hold the same till further orders." The order, in duplicate, left New York by two naval vessels about the middle of March as the mail and wires could not be trusted, and detached officers could not be substituted, for two had already been arrested and paroled by the authorities of Pensacola, despatches taken from one of them, and a third, to escape like treatment, forced to turn back when near that city. That those authorities have not ceased to make war upon the United States since the capture by them of the navy yard, January 12th.

Respectfully submitted,  
WINDFELD SCOTT.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,  
WASHINGTON, March 3, 1861.

"The plan invented by Gen. Scott to stop Secession was, like all campaigns devised by him, very able in its details and nearly certain of general success. The Southern States are full of arsenals and forts commanding their rivers and strategic points. Gen. Scott desired to transfer the garrison of the United States to these forts as speedily and quietly as possible. The Southern States could not cut off communication between the Government and the fortresses without a great fleet, which they cannot build for years or take them by land without one hundred thousand men, many hundred millions of dollars, several campaigns, and many a bloody siege. Had Scott been able to have got these forts in the condition he desired them to be, the Southern Confederacy would not now exist."—Part of the eulogy pronounced on Secretary Floyd (who defeated Scott's plan) by the Richmond Examiner, on Floyd's reception at that city.

† It was not till January 4th that, by the aid of Secretary Holt [a strong and loyal man] I obtained permission to send succor to the beleaguered Fort Taylor, Key West, and at the same time a company—Major Arnold's from Boston—to occupy Ft. Jefferson, Tortugas Island. If this company had been three days later, the fort would have been occupied by Floridians. It is known that the rebels had their eyes upon those powerful forts, which govern the commerce of the Mexican Gulf, as Gibraltar and Malta govern that of the Mediterranean. With Forts Jefferson and Taylor the rebels might have purchased early European recognition.

† It was known at the Navy Department that the Brooklyn, with Captain Vogles on board, would be obliged in open sea to stand off and on Fort Pickens, and in rough weather might some times be fifty miles off.—Indeed, if ten miles at sea, the fort might have been attacked and easily carried before the reinforcement could have reached the beach, in open sea, where alone it could land.

‡ The population of the Russian empire in 1722 was 14,900,000; in 1803 36,000,000; and at present it amounts to 65,000,000.

An English farmer recently remarked that "he fed his land before it was hungry, rested it before it was weary and weeded it before it was foul." We have seldom, if ever, seen so much agricultural wisdom condensed in a single sentence.

## Letter from Ex-President Buchanan.—His Reply to General Scott.—The Beginning of the Rebellion.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.—On Wednesday last, I received the National "Intelligencer," containing Gen. Scott's address to the public. This is throughout an unambiguous avowal of my conduct for the last months of the Administration, in regard to seven Cotton States now in rebellion. From our past relations, I was greatly surprised at the appearance of such a paper. In one aspect, however, it was highly gratifying. It has justified me, may, it has rendered it absolutely unnecessary that I should no longer remain silent in respect to the charges which have long been vaguely circulating, but are now endorsed by the responsible name Gen. Scott.

I. The first and most prominent among these charges is my refusal immediately to garrison nine enumerated fortifications, scattered over six of the Southern States, according to the recommendation of Gen. Scott, in his "views," addressed to the War Department on the 29th and 30th of October, 1860. And it has even been alleged that if this had been done it might have prevented the civil war.

This refusal is attributed, without the least cause, to the influence of Governor Floyd. All my Cabinet must bear me witness that I was the President myself, responsible for all the acts of the Administration; and certain it is that during the last six months previous to the 28th of December 1860, the day on which he resigned his office, after my request, he exercised less influence on the Administration than any other member of the Cabinet. Mr. Holt was immediately transferred from the Post Office Department to that of War; so that, from this time until the 4th of March, 1861, which was by far the most important period of the Administration, he performed the duties of the Secretary of War to my entire satisfaction.

But I did not immediately garrison these nine fortifications, in such a manner, to use the language of Gen. Scott, "as to make any attempt to take any one of them by surprise or *compulsively* ridiculous? There is one answer both easy and conclusive, even if other valid reasons did exist. There were no available troops within reach which could be sent to these fortifications. To have attempted a military operation on a scale so extensive by any means within the President's power would have been simply absurd. Of this General Scott himself seems to have been convinced, for on the day after the date of his first "views" he addressed [On the 30th of October] supplemental views to the War Department in which he states: "There is one [regular] company in Boston, one here [at the narrows], one at Pittsburg, one at Augusta [Ga.], one at Baton Rouge," in all five companies only within reach to garrison or reinforce the forts mentioned in the "views."

Five companies—four hundred men—to occupy and reinforce nine fortifications in six highly exposed Southern States! The force "within reach" was so entirely inadequate that nothing more need be said on the subject. To have attempted such a military movement with so feeble a force, would have been an invitation to collision and secession. Indeed, if the whole American army, consisting then of only sixteen thousand men, had been "within reach," they would have been scarcely sufficient for this purpose. Such was our want of troops, that, although Gen. Scott, believing in opposition to the opinion of the committee raised in the House of Representatives, that the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln might be interrupted by military force, was only able to assemble at Washington, so late as the 4th of March, six hundred and fifty three men, rank and file of the army. And to make up this number, even the sappers and miners were brought from West Point.

But why was there no greater force within reach? This question could be better answered by General Scott himself than by any other person. Our small regular army, with the exception of a few hundred men, were out of reach, on our remote frontiers where it had been continuously stationed for years, to protect the inhabitants and the emigrants, on their way thither, against attacks of hostile Indians. All were insufficient, and both Gen. Scott and myself endeavored in vain to prevail upon Congress to raise several additional regiments for this purpose.—In recommending this augmentation of the General States, in his report to the War Department, of November, 1857, that "it would not more than furnish the reinforcements now greatly needed in Florida, Texas, New Mexico, California, Oregon, Washington, [T.] Kansas,

Nebraska, Minnesota, leaving not a company for Utah." And again, in his report of November, 1853, he says:

"This want of troops, to give reasonable security to our citizens in distant settlements, including emigrants on the plains, can scarcely be too strongly stated; but I will only add, that as often as we have been obliged to withdraw troops from one frontier to reinforce another, the weakened points have been instantly attacked or threatened with formidable invasion."

These "views" of General Scott exhibit the crude notions then prevailing even among intelligent and patriotic men on this subject of secession. In the first sentence the General, whilst stating that "to save time the right of secession may be conceded," yet immediately says "this is instantly balanced by the correlative right on the part of the Federal Government against an interior State or States to re-establish by force, if necessary, its former continuity of territory." [For this he cites, "Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy, last chapter." It may be there, but I have been unable to find it.] Whilst it is difficult to ascertain his precise meaning in this passage, he renders what he did not mean quite clear in his supplementary "views." In these he says: "It will be seen that the 'views' only apply to a case of secession that makes a gap in the present Union. The falling off say of Texas, or of all the Atlantic States, from the Potomac South, [the very thing which has occurred.] was not within the scope of General Scott's 'provisional remedies;' that is to say, to establish by force, if necessary, the continuity of our territory. In his 'views' he also states as follows: "But break this glorious Union by whatever line or lines that political madness may contrive, and there would be no hope of recruiting the fragments except by the incitation and despotism of the sword. To effect such a result the intestine wars of our Mexican neighbors would, in comparison to ours, sink into mere child's play." In the General's opinion, "a smaller evil (than these intestine wars) would be to allow the fragments of the great Republic to form themselves into new Confederacies, probably four." He then points out what ought to be the boundaries between the new Unions; and at the end of each goes so far as even to indicate the cities which ought to be capitals of the three first on this side of the Rocky Mountains, to wit, "Columbia, South Carolina," "Alton or Quincy, Illinois," and "Albany, New York," excluding Washington City altogether. This indication of capital contained in the original now in my possession, is curiously omitted in the version published in the National Intelligencer. He designates no capital for the fourth Union on the Pacific. The reader will judge what encouragement these views, proceeding from so distinguished a source, must have afforded to the secessionists of the Cotton States.

It must I have said enough and more than enough to convince every mind why I did not, with a force of five companies, attempt to reinforce Forts Jackson and St. Philip, on the Mississippi; Fort Morgan, below Mobile, Fort Pickens and McRae, in Pensacola Harbor, Fort Pulaski, below Savannah; Fort Moultrie and Sumpter, Charleston Harbor, and Fort Monroe, in Virginia.

These "views," both original and supplementary, were published by General Scott in the National Intelligencer of January 18, 1861, at the most important and critical period of the Administration. Their publication, at that time, could do no possible good, and it might do much harm. To have published them without the President's knowledge and consent, was as much a violation of the sacred confidence which ought to prevail between the commanding General of the army and the Commander-in-chief as it would have been for the Secretary of War to publish the same document without his authority.—What is of more importance, their publication was calculated injuriously to affect the compromise measures then pending before Congress and the country, and to encourage the secessionists in their mad and wicked attempt to shatter the Union into fragments. For the great respect which I then entertained for the General, I passed it over in silence.

It is worthy of remark that soon after the Presidential election representations of what these views "views" contained, of more or less correctness, were unfortunately circulated, especially throughout the South. The editors of the "National Intelligencer" in assigning a reason for their publication, state that both in public prints and in public speeches allusions had been made to them, and some misapprehensions of their character had got abroad.